

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00196 061451Z

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SUBJECT: PARTI NATIONALE POPULAIRE AND UNIONS NATIONALE

FORM ALLIANCE

REF: A-40, A-22

1. QUEBEC'S TWO SMALL RIGHT OF CENTER "ASPIRANT THIRD FORCE" PARTIES - PARTI NATIONALE POPULAIRE AND UNION NATIONALE - ANNOUNCED AUGUST 4 THAT THEY HAD FORMED AN "ALLIANCE." THE PARTNERS WILL HOLD A CONGRESS IN OCTOBER TO DISCUSS FUSION OF THEIR TWO PARTIES AS WELL AS THE RESULTING PARTY S NAME, ORGANIZATION, AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION. UNTIL THEN, PNP LEADER JEROME CHOQUETTE HAS ASSUMED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE GROUP, WHILE THE UN S LEADER OF TWO MONTHS, RODRIGUE BIRON, BECOMES THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEADER. THE UN PATRIARCH, MAURICE BELLEMARE, WILL BE PARLIAMENTARY CHIEF OF THE NEW ALLIANCE. IN THE OPINION OF MOST OBSERVERS, JEROME CHOQUETTE EMERGES FROM THE MANEUVER AS THE MOST LIKELY LEADER.

2. LONG SOUGHT-AFTER COMPROMISE WAS APPARENTLY ENGINEERED BY BELLEMARE, WHO CONTINUES TO CONTROL 750,000 DOLLARS UNION NATIONALE WAR CHEST AND WAS REPORTEDLY DISSATISFIED WITH BIRON S LEADERSHIP. SEVERAL UN LEADERS HAVE QUIT OR HAVE BECOME INACTIVE DUE TO DISENCHANTMENT WITH BIRON. CHOQUETTE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY MORE APPROACHABLE NOW THAN LAST WINTER, AS HIS PNP WAS HAVING NO SUCCESS THIS SUMMER ESTABLISHING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS. ALL WERE UNEASY DURING QUEBEC CITY CEREMONY HELD YESTERDAY TO ANNOUNCE AGREEMENT WHICH SEEMS RATHER FRAGILE.

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PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00196 061451Z

BIRON HAD INSISTED THAT CHOQUETTE WOULD HAVE TO COME TO HIM,

BUT CHOQUETTE DID NOT. BELLEMARE HAD STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNION NATIONALE NAME FOR ANY NEW PARTY (REFAIRS), BUT ISSUE REMAINS UNRESOLVED. CHOQUETTE SAW HIMSELF REDUCED TO STATUS OF BACKBENCHER IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NAMED POLITICAL LEADER OF THE ALLIANCE OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY. (FABIAN ROY WILL BE PARLIAMENTARY FLOOR LEADER.) WHILE PNP AGREED EASILY TO COMPROMISE ENTENTE, UN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ONLY APPROVED IT BY 8-6 MARGIN.

3. FIRST REACTION CAME FROM SOME MONTREAL ANGLOPHONES WHO HAD JOINED UN AFTER BIRON PROMISED TO WIPE OUT BILL 22 ESTABLISHING FRENCH AS QUEBEC S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THEY FEEL BETRAYED BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT JEROME CHOQUETTE, WHO QUIT THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR BECAUSE HE WANTED BILL 22 ENFORCED MORE STRONGLY, WILL CONTROL THE POLITICS OF QUEBEC'S NEW POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

4. COMMENT: ANNOUNCEMENT OF ENTENTE CAME AS A SURPRISE AS ITS NEGOTIATION WAS A WELL-KEPT SECRET. FACT THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE KEPT SECRET PROBABLY HELPED OVERCOME PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES WHICH TORPEDOED PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS FIND COMMON GROUND. MAIN IMPETUS NONETHELESS WAS REALIZATION THAT PNP AND UN WERE GOING NOWHERE AS SEPARATE ENTITIES. SERIOUS AND SO FAR UNRESOLVABLE PROBLEMS OF PERMANENT LEADERSHIP AND NAME FOR PARTY AS WELL AS RECENTLY DEVELOPED DIFFERENCES OVER LANGUAGE POLICY REMAIN TO BE SOLVED AT OCTOBER ORIENTATION CONGRESS AND LEADERSHIP CONGRESS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR EARLY 1977. ALLIANCE AGREEMENT, IF IT HOLDS TOGETHER, INDICATES THESE PROBLEMS WILL NOW BE ADDRESSED WITHIN ORGANIZED FRAMEWORK RATHER THAN ON PREVIOUSLY UNSUCCESSFUL AD-HOC BASIS. IF BOURASSA CONFRONTS ALLIANCE WITH ELECTION THIS FALL, ALLIANCE WILL RUN CANDIDATES UNDER SEPARATE PARTY NAMES BUT PARTIES WILL NOT COMPETE HEAD-TO-HEAD IN INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS AND MAY FIELD A COMMON CANDIDATE IN SOME DISTRICTS.
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